

Intelligence Report

DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

12 June 1995

Bosnian Serb Air Defense Forces

While some Bosnian Serb leaders are claiming they will have complete command of their airspace in the near future, Bosnian Serb air defense forces probably will maintain a defensive posture--albeit at a heightened level of readiness--and not engage NATO aircraft except in situations where NATO aircraft are perceived as posing a direct threat to their positions, or as retaliation for other NATO actions in country. Nevertheless, man-portable SAMs and AAA almost certainly will harass NATO aircraft on a more frequent basis. The Bosnian Serbs have made their point that they are capable of shooting down a NATO aircraft over Bosnia, but they probably do not wish to risk provoking destruction of their air defense equipment in further engagements with NATO aircraft.

The Air Defense System

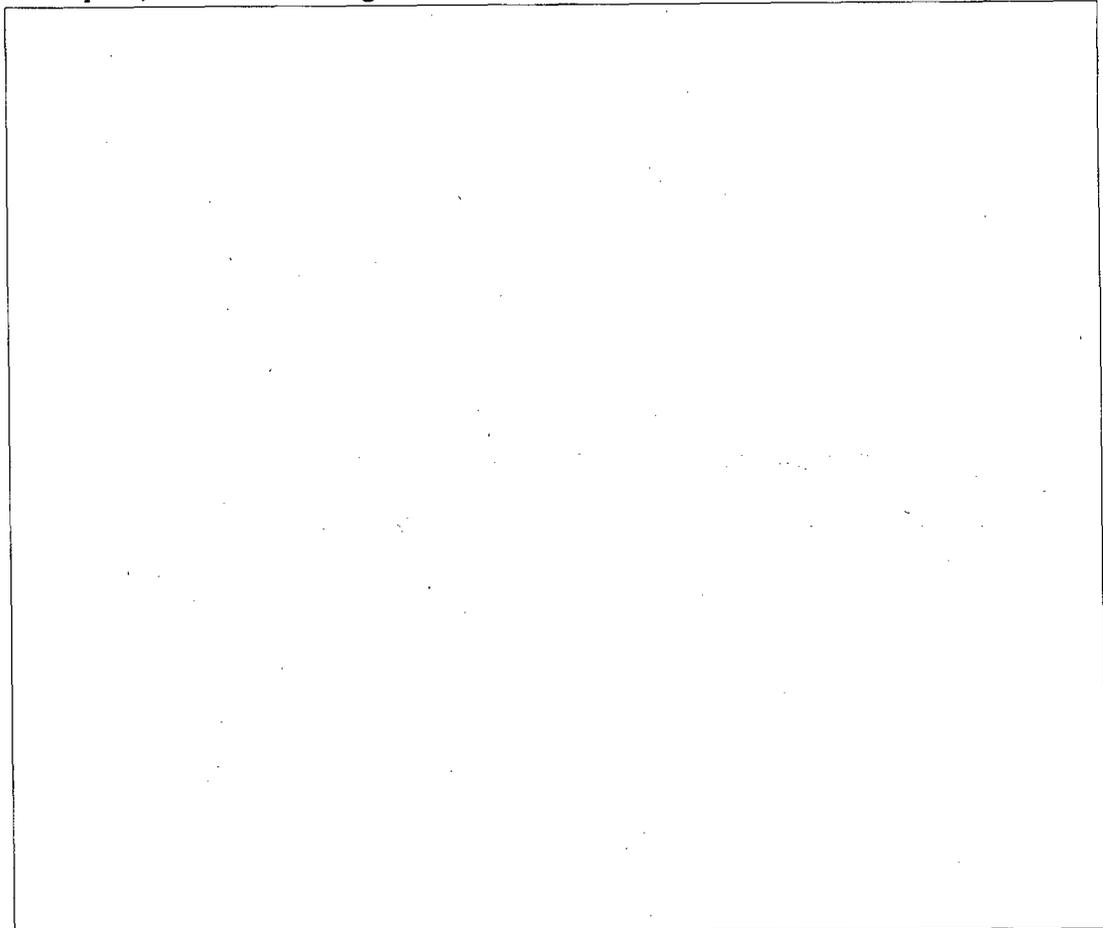
The Intelligence Community's understanding of the Bosnian Serb air defense network is fair. The primary shortfall is our inability to track consistently the Serbs' three batteries of mobile, medium-range SA-6 missiles. These systems move frequently and are capable of deployment throughout Bosnian Serb-held territory. The Bosnian Serbs are capable of tracking NATO aircraft anywhere over Bosnia and of passing this information to missile and air defense artillery units. Bosnian Serb air defenses include several SA-2 and SA-6 surface-to-air missile batteries based in the vicinity of Banja Luka. Several short-range SA-9 systems and an unknown number of portable SAM systems such as the SA-7 are also in their inventory. These units are complemented by a large number of short-range anti-aircraft artillery units. All are capable of rapid movement to the vicinity of high-interest areas, such as the Bihac enclave and Tuzla. The Bosnian Serbs routinely move their missiles and guns to make NATO targeting difficult. They are also well-versed in camouflage, concealment and deception.

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to Norm Schindler, Chief, DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force. [redacted]

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Early Warning

The Bosnian Serbs maintain at least two, possibly three, early warning radar sites in Bosnia. The two known sites are located at Lisina in the vicinity of Banja Luka and at Jahorina mountain, south of Sarajevo. There is also an early warning site at Bihac, but this may be Krajina Serb. Even so, it probably feeds information into the Bosnian Serb system. All three are equipped with Western Marconi air-traffic-control and height-finder radars capable of providing information on aircraft operating over the country. This equipment is also capable of interrogating IFF mode 3. These systems provide complete, redundant coverage over all of Bosnia.



SA-2

The SA-2 system is used primarily for defense of strategic targets such as Banja Luka, but occasionally is deployed to provide coverage of the Bihac enclave. We believe most of the fixed SA-2 sites within Bosnia have been identified. These systems can, however, operate from temporary sites if required.

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- We believe that the Serbs currently have four SA-2 battalions--a total of 24 launchers. No fixed sites currently contain a complete set of SA-2 equipment--including launchers and fire-control radars. The Bosnian Serbs, however, have demonstrated the capability to make a site operational in a matter of hours. They also routinely deploy dummy equipment at sites to make identifying operational batteries difficult.
- The one battalion of Serb SA-3s is unlikely to become operational in the immediate future. No activity by this unit has been observed for over a year.

SA-6 and SA-9

The Bosnian Serbs have three batteries of SA-6 and four batteries of SA-9 mobile missiles. Mobile systems--particularly the SA-6--are deployed primarily to protect key points, but may be used to provide limited area coverage. The short-range SA-9s are typically assigned to support army units--four were recently spotted near Sarajevo.

- SA-6s have been noted regularly in the vicinity of Banja Luka, Han Pijesak, and around the Bihac enclave. One battery was reported near the Croatian border during Zagreb's recent conquest of UN Sector West. A SA-6 battery also was noted near Tuzla in February following reports of cargo aircraft using the airfield.
- Locating systems such as the SA-6 is difficult because of their mobility and ability to operate from unprepared sites. The first indication of an SA-6 deployment often comes only when they operate their acquisition/target tracking radar. The battery deployed to Bosanska Petrovac was not detected until immediately before the 2 June attack on the US F-16 aircraft.
- a semi-proficient crew could acquire, track and engage a target within the STRAIGHT FLUSH radar envelope in approximately 60 seconds.

Man-portable SAMs

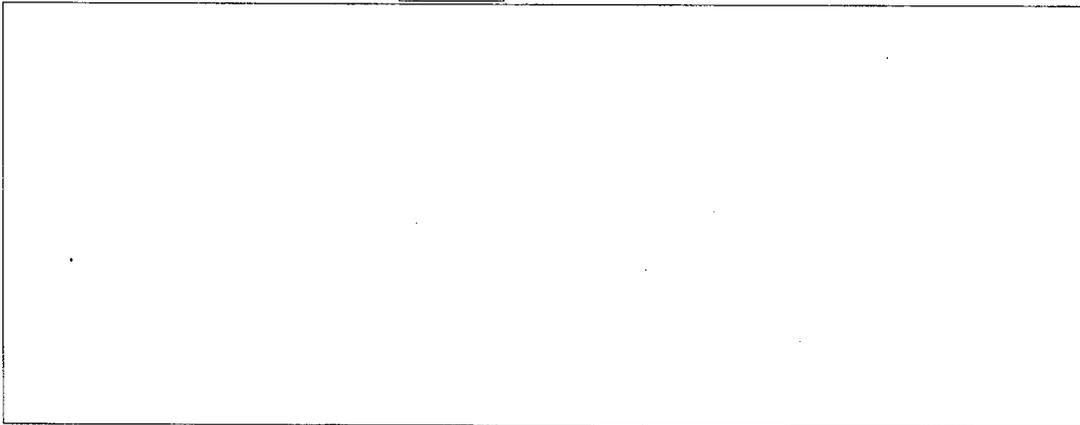
The number of portable, shoulder-fired missiles--SA-7/14/16 and possibly SA-18 systems--currently in the Bosnian Serb inventory is unknown. There are probably small units with these systems assigned to most of the larger army units operating throughout the country. They are responsible for most of the missile attacks on NATO aircraft to date--including the destruction of a British Sea Harrier in 1994.

Engagement

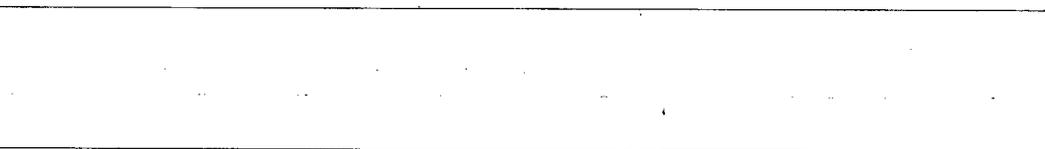
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There is no definitive indicator, beyond the use of the target acquisition/tracking radars of the various weapons systems to show imminent hostile intent/action by the Bosnian Serb air defense forces. In the case of the SA-6, the use of the target illumination radar should be viewed as a hostile action as the missile can be launched before the illuminator is active. [redacted]



In the event of a NATO air campaign or some other situation where Bosnian Serb air defense forces make a concerted effort to bring down NATO aircraft, we probably will see heightened [redacted] activity that could provide key indicators that engagements are imminent. [redacted]

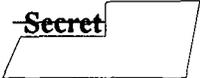


Bosnian Serb Intentions

Recent press statements by the Bosnian Serb leaders--primarily Radovan Karadzic--indicate that the Serbs intend to reestablish full sovereignty over all of its territory and airspace. They would also seek to ban all unauthorized flights in their airspace. The unauthorized flights probably include NATO DENY FLIGHT patrols and UN resupply flights not approved by the Bosnian Serb leadership. Karadzic has also commented that the NATO overflights are illegal and criminal. This is probably more political rhetoric than a claim of full control over Bosnian Serb airspace. The Bosnian Serbs do not have the forces to completely control their airspace--but they can make flying through it dangerous. [redacted]

Authorization for use of the radar-guided SAMs--the Bosnian Serbs' most effective system--probably comes from the highest levels of the Bosnian Serb political and military structures and, short of declared hostilities or further airstrikes, will probably not be used due to the risks involved with such an engagement, particularly to the SAM system employed.

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- The rules-of-engagement (ROE) for air defense forces--particularly the radar-guided SAMs--will probably return to their normal, defensive posture, although at heightened readiness levels. The shootdown of the F-16 probably does not represent a permanent change in the ROE--it was a reaction to the recent airstrikes. Indiscriminate fire by AAA and manpads can be encountered on any mission over Bosnia, as has been the case for the entire time of the DENY FLIGHT mission; however, other NATO actions such as airstrikes or aerial resupply of the enclaves would provoke the ROE to become more aggressive--as was the case after the NATO airstrikes over Gorazde in April 1994, Udbina in November 1994, and Pale in May 1995.

- Man-portable (manpad) and infra-red guided SAMs and AAA--the weapons systems most numerous in Bosnia--will still to be fired at NATO aircraft without provocation. These weapons systems have regularly targeted and fired on NATO and UN aircraft. Several NATO aircraft have received fire attributable to these weapons. In April 1994, a British Sea Harrier was shot down in the vicinity of Gorazde by a manpad. In December 1994, a French Etendard was hit by an IR-guided SAM, but returned to ship. Just prior to the downing of the F-16 on 2 June, IR SAMs reportedly were fired on 1 and 2 June at NATO aircraft operating in the vicinity of Sarajevo. AAA fire has been received on numerous occasions. 

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